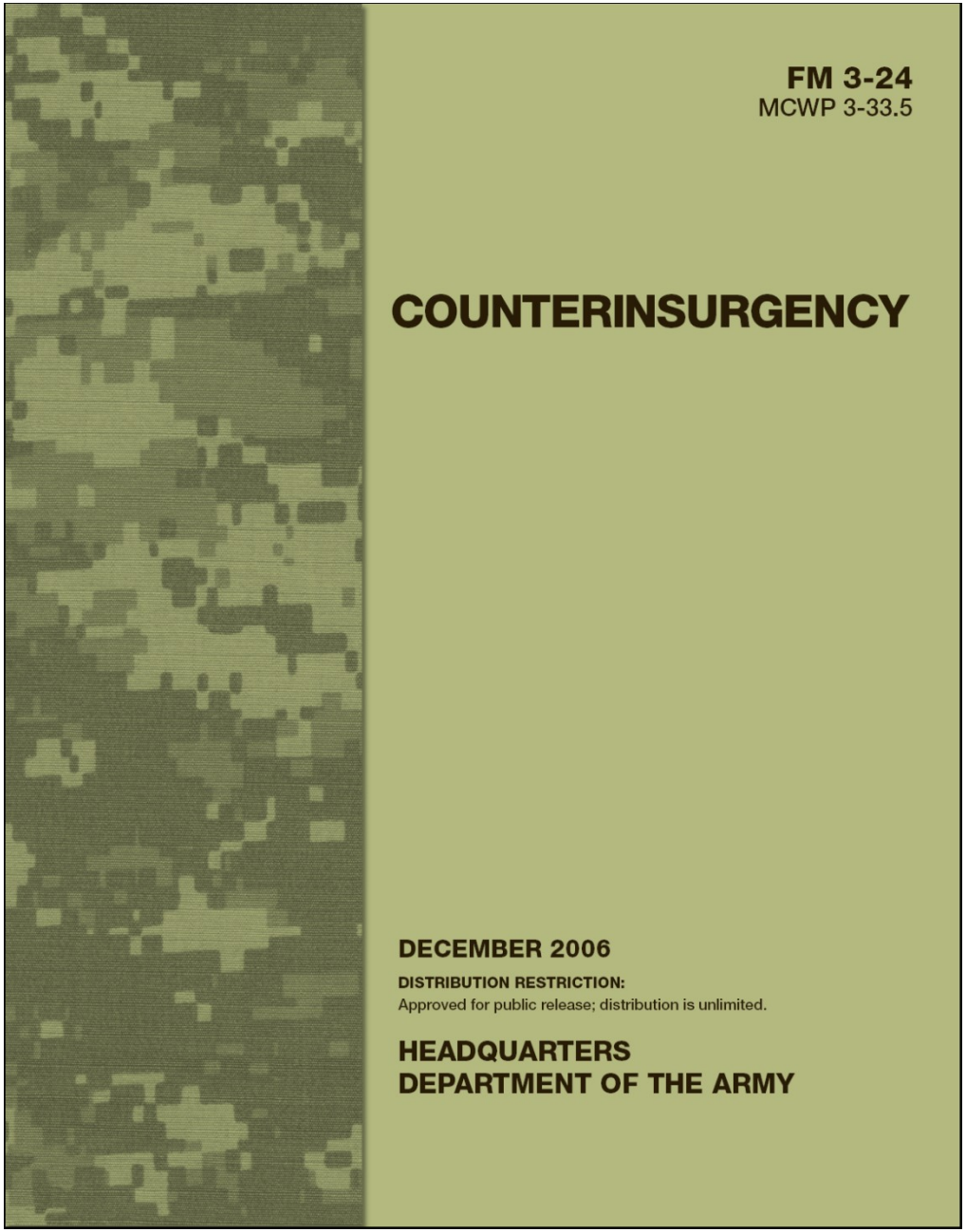
FM 3-24 Principles, Imperatives, and Foundations of COIN



FM 3-24 Overview

- Manual provides principles & guidelines for counterinsurgency operations.
- Manual designed to fill a 20 year doctrine gap.
- FM 3-24 Foreword “A counterinsurgency campaign is a mix of offensive, defensive and stability operations conducted along multiple lines of operation”.

  - Chapter 1 – Insurgency and Counterinsurgency
  - Chapter 2 – Unity of Effort: Integrating Civilian and Military Activities
  - Chapter 3 – Intelligence in Counterinsurgency
  - Chapter 4 – Designing Counterinsurgency Campaigns and Operations
  - Chapter 5 – Executing Counterinsurgency
  - Chapter 6 – Developing Host-Nation Security Forces
  - Chapter 7 – Leadership and Ethics for Counterinsurgency
  - Chapter 8 – Sustainment

Historical Principles of COIN

How is COIN different?

Historical Principles for COIN

1. Legitimacy is the Main Objective
2. You Must Understand the Environment
3. Unity of Effort is Essential
4. Intelligence Drives Operations
5. Prepare for a Long-Term Commitment
6. Political Factors are Primary
7. Security Under the Rule of Law is Essential
8. Insurgents Must be Separated from Their *Cause* and Support

FM 3-24, Chap 1, pg 1-20

Historical Principles for COIN

1. Legitimacy is the Main Objective

FM 3-24, Chap 1, pg 1-21

Historical Principles for COIN

2. You Must Understand the Environment

Historical Principles for COIN

3. Unity of Effort is Essential

FM 3-24, Chap 1, pg 1-22

Historical Principles for COIN

4. Intelligence Drives Operations

U.S. Air Force photo by SSgt. Jason Robertson

FM 3-24, Chap 1, pg 1-23

Historical Principles for COIN

5. Prepare for a Long-Term

FM 3-24, Chap 1, pg 1-24

Historical Principles for COIN

6. Political factors are Primary

FM 3-24, Chap 1, pg 1-22

Historical Principles for COIN

7. Security Under Rule of Law is Essential

FM 3-24, Chap 1, pg 1-23

Historical Principles for COIN

8. Insurgents Must be Isolated from Their *Cause* and Support

FM 3-24, Chap 1, pg 1-23

Paradoxes of COIN Operations

Paradoxes of COIN Operations

1. Sometimes, the More You Protect Your Force, the Less Secure You May Be
2. Sometimes, The More Force Is Used, The Less Effective It Is
3. The More Successful The Counterinsurgency Is, The Less Force Can Be Used And The More Risk Must Be Accepted
4. Sometimes Doing Nothing Is The Best Reaction
5. Some Of The Best Weapons For Counterinsurgents Do Not Shoot
6. The Host Nation Doing Something Tolerably Is Normally Better Than Us Doing It Well
7. If A Tactic Works This Week, It Might Not Work Next Week: If It Works In This Province, It Might Not Work In The Next
8. Tactical Success Guarantees Nothing
9. Many Important Decisions Are Not Made By Generals

Paradoxes

1. Sometimes, the more you protect your forces, the less secure you may be

FM 3-24, Chap 1, pg 27

Paradoxes

2. Sometimes, The More Force Is Used, The Less Effective It Is

FM 3-24, Chap 1, pg 1-27

Myth: Reality

- However, Force is NOT necessarily counterproductive ***if*** :
  - You kill the RIGHT people
  - There is a purpose to it that the people can understand
  - Your information engagement campaign is consistent with the action
  - You use appropriate force for the situation
  - It creates security as part of a nested plan

Paradoxes

3. The More Successful Counterinsurgency Is, The Less Force Can Be Used And The More Risk Must Be Accepted

Paradoxes

4. Sometimes Doing Nothing Is The Best Reaction

FM 3-24, Chap 1, pg 1-27

Paradoxes

5. Some Of The Best Weapons For Counterinsurgents Do Not Shoot

FM 3-24, Chap , pg 1-27

Paradoxes

6. The Host Nation Doing Something Tolerably Is Normally Better Than Us Doing It Well

U.S. Air Force photo by TSgt. Jeremy T. Lo

FM 3-24, Chap , pg 1-27

Remember Article 15

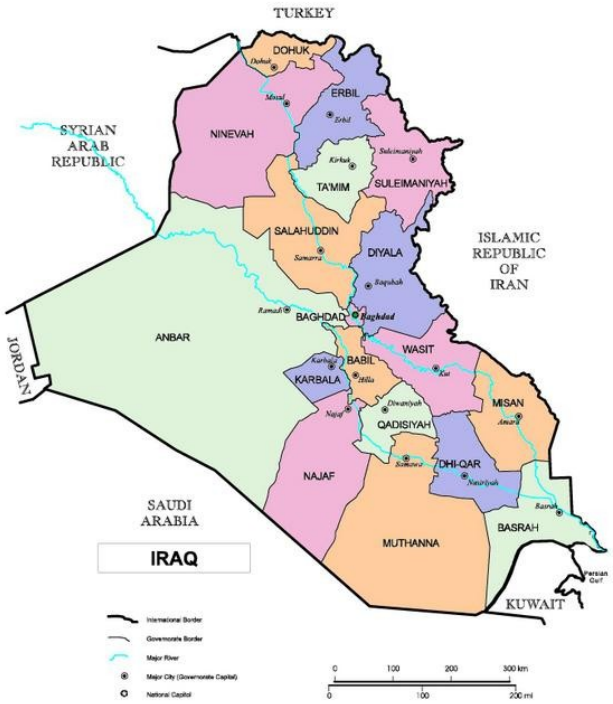
"Do not try to do too much with your own hands. Better the Arabs do it tolerably than that you do it perfectly. It is their war, and you are to help them, not to win it for them.

Actually, also, under the very odd conditions of Arabia, your practical work will not be as good as, perhaps, you think it is."

T.E. Lawrence, "Twenty-Seven Articles", *The Arab Bulletin*, 20 August 1917

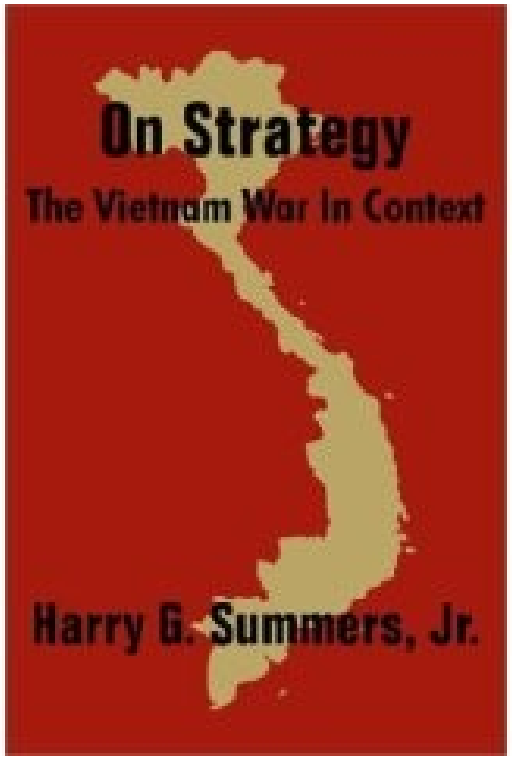
Paradoxes

7. If A Tactic Works This Week, It Might Not Work Next Week: If It Works In This Province, It Might Not Work In



Paradoxes

8. Tactical Success Guarantees Nothing



COL Harry Summers told a North Vietnamese counterpart in 1975 that,

"You know, you never defeated us on the battlefield,"

to which the reply was,

"That may be so, but it is also irrelevant."

FM 3-24, Chap 1, pg 1-28

Paradoxes

9. Many Important Decisions Are Not Made By Generals

"On a recent afternoon, he … checked on refurbished water pumps for farmers and approved money to connect the pumping station … there were soccer uniforms to be dropped off for a community team, heated disputes to resolve, an influential sheik to visit.

"It is purely my fight in my

FM 3-24, Chap 1, pg 1-28

What Doesn't Work?

Unsuccessful COIN Practices

- Overemphasize killing and capturing the enemy rather than securing and engaging the populace.
- Conduct large-scale operations as the norm.
- Concentrate military forces in large bases for protection.
- Focus special forces primarily on raiding.
- Place low priority on assigning quality advisors to host nation forces.
- Build and train host-nation security forces in the U.S. military's image.
- Ignore peacetime government processes, including legal procedures.
- Allow open borders, airspace, and coastlines.

What Works?

Successful COIN Practices

- Emphasize intelligence.
- Focus on population, its needs and security.
- Establish and expand secure areas.
- Isolate insurgents from the population.
- Conduct effective, pervasive and continuous information operations.
- Provide amnesty and rehabilitation for those willing to support the new government.
- Place host-nation police in the lead with military support as soon as the security situation permits.

FM 3-24, Chap 1, pg 1-29

What Works?

Successful COIN Practices

- Expand and diversify the host-nation police force.
- Train military forces to conduct COIN operations.
- Embed quality advisors and special forces with host-nation forces
- Deny sanctuary to insurgents.
- Encourage strong political and military cooperation and information sharing.
- Secure host-nation borders.
- Protect key infrastructure.

FM 3-24, Chap 1, pg 1-29

Questions?

FM 3-24 Practical Exercise

- Task: Understand/Familiarize with FM 3-24
- Conditions: Given 1h, FM 3-24
  - 5 Breakout Sections – designated by cadre
  - Section 1: Chapter 2
  - Section 2: Chapter 5, pp. 5-1 to 5-17
  - Section 3: Chapter 5, pp. 5-18 to 5-31
  - Section 4: Chapter 7
  - Section 5: Appendix A
- Standard: 3 min brief back of key points to groups beginning 1600

Paradoxes

Sometimes, The More Force Is Used, The Less Effective It Is .... BUT ....

FM 3-24, Chap 1, pg 1-27